
From: Gillian Cook [oddbits@rcn.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2009 10:58 AM
To: catrice.williams@state.ma.us
Subject: Years of problems with Verizon

Dear Ms. Williams,

I live on 5 Old Long Plain Road Road in Leverett, Massachusetts. I just read the article in today's Gazette about Verizon phone service in the western part of the state and had to write to you. I am SO frustrated about the poor quality of the Verizon phone service it's hard to be polite.

I, and all my neighbors on the street, have experienced ongoing problems with phone service for years. Problems vary from humming, crackling, and hissing, particularly during wet weather, to no service at all. For example, I lost all service on my primary phone line on the morning of New Years Eve 2008 and did not get it back until Monday February 6th, 2009. I called the day it went out, a Wednesday, and was told it would be repaired by Friday. When I had no service Friday, I called and was told there was just a humming on the line. I explained I had no service at all and they promised to fix it by Sunday at 6. Sunday at 4, no Verizon worker in sight, I called again, and was told a) there was just a humming on my line and b) they never send people out on the weekend. I was more than aggravated. Eventually, Verizon fixed the phone on Monday.

Having called numerous times about problems with the lines, I have talked to both line men (very nice people) and the managers at Verizon on a number of occasions. _Without exception_, they have all acknowledged that our lines are old and need to be replaced, but Verizon will not do it because it is too expensive.

I am particularly upset about this because it also impacts the possibility of getting DSL. I know this is not your focus, but I would like you to consider the following. Leverett is one of the 24 unserved/underserved towns that Governor Patrick was targeting when he made funds available for building infrastructure to allow high speed Internet access. Verizon came to a meeting (packed!) in Leverett last year to tell us what they were doing to bring us high speed access.

They said, in the meeting, that they were making this outreach effort because they wanted the money the governor had up for rfp. They initially promised 70% of the identified towns would get service. When pressed, they said 55% of Leverett homes would get it. When asked if they were aware that our lines are in such poor repair that we can barely make and receive calls they started to become defensive. It turned out that only a limited number of homes would be served. When we asked if they won the rfp would Verizon replace the deficient lines they said no.

I have since heard that Verizon did win the money. I also have it on good authority that they are spending it in the eastern part of the state where they can make a profit on the new lines. I believe that any investigation of Verizon services in this part of the state should include a review of how they are spending the new infrastructure money they were just awarded: it's definitely not in Leverett.

Gillian Cook
(413) 548-9608